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### **Reports**

- [Item#1](#)  
Most Think the U.S. Has No Responsibility To Act in Iraq. Pew Research Center for the People & the Press. July 18, 2014.

As violence and chaos spreads in Iraq, the public is wary of U.S. involvement in the country. A 55% majority says the United States does not have a responsibility to do something about the violence in Iraq; 39% do see a responsibility to act. Overall public awareness of the situation in Iraq is high: 45% say they have heard a lot about the violence in Iraq and takeover of large parts of the country by the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS).

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://www.people-press.org/files/2014/07/07-18-14-Iraq-Release1.pdf> [PDF format, 14 pages, 419.67 KB].

#### Item#2

Beyond Sanctions: What's the West's Strategy on Russia? Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Ulrich Speck. August 1, 2014.

Western sanctions against Russia appear to have a fairly narrow, tangible goal: to punish Moscow for supporting pro-Russian rebels in eastern Ukraine. But to what end? Sanctions need to reinforce a wider strategy designed to change Moscow's behavior so that it starts respecting the sovereignty of all post-Soviet states. Ukraine is just the latest example in a long series of attempts by Russia to control its neighborhood and to reduce the sovereignty of countries that were controlled by Moscow in Soviet times. The conflict did not start in Ukraine, and it will not end there. The tensions that have erupted in Ukraine will subside only if Russia finally understands that it can have a prosperous future as a nation-state alongside others when it respects the rules of the post-World War II and post-Cold War international system.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://carnegieeurope.eu/2014/08/01/beyond-sanctions-what-s-west-s-strategy-on-russia/hjho> [HTML format, various paging].

#### Item#3

U.S.-China Military Contacts: Issues for Congress. Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress. Shirley A. Kan. July 29, 2014.

The report discusses policy issues regarding military-to-military (mil-to-mil) contacts with the People's Republic of China (PRC) and provides a record of major contacts and crises since 1993. The United States suspended military contacts with China and imposed sanctions on arms sales in response to the Tiananmen Crackdown in 1989. In 1993, the Clinton Administration reengaged with the top PRC leadership, including China's military, the People's Liberation Army (PLA). Renewed military exchanges with the PLA have not regained the closeness reached in the 1980s, when U.S.-PRC strategic cooperation against the Soviet Union included U.S. arms sales to China. Improvements and deteriorations in overall bilateral relations have affected military contacts, which were close in 1997-1998 and 2000, but marred by the 1995-1996 Taiwan Strait crisis, mistaken NATO bombing of a PRC embassy in 1999, the EP-3 aircraft collision crisis in 2001, and aggressive maritime confrontations (including in 2009).

<http://fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/RL32496.pdf> [PDF format, 87 pages, 845.63 KB].

#### Item#4

Wakeup Call for Europe. YaleGlobal. Philippe Legrain. August 5, 2014.

"Europe isn't just falling further behind the United States; it also faces ever-greater competition from China, India, Brazil, Mexico, Turkey, Korea and other emerging economies, not just in lower-end manufacturing but also in higher-tech sectors," writes economist Philippe Legrain. Depressed demand, poor productivity and an aging population put the continent on a path for decline. But rather than support radical reforms, many voters endorse extreme policies that target immigrants. Leadership has been clubby and class-based, he contends. Instead, the continent needs bold leaders who could tackle Europe's real problems of vested interests, crony capitalism, troubled banks and unsustainable benefits. Political entrepreneurs and a grassroots movement must vigorously pursue accountability and boost productivity, wages and optimism.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/wakeup-call-europe> [HTML format, various paging].

#### Item#5

Africa in the Wider World. Center for Strategic & International Studies. Richard Downie et al. July 22, 2014.

The U.S.-Africa Leaders' Summit, being hosted by President Barack Obama in August 2014, acknowledges the increasing strategic, economic, and diplomatic importance of Africa and signals a desire by the United States to step up its engagement with one of the world's fastest-growing regions. The summit provides a timely opportunity to take stock of some of the dynamic changes that have been taking place in Africa's 54 countries and to examine the shifting contours of its relations with the rest of the world.

[http://csis.org/files/publication/140717\\_Downie\\_AfricaWiderWorld\\_Web.pdf](http://csis.org/files/publication/140717_Downie_AfricaWiderWorld_Web.pdf) [PDF format, 46 pages, 7.07 MB].

#### Item#6

Risk of Relapse: Somalia Crisis Alert. Oxfam International. July 24, 2014.

On 7 May 2014, 26 agencies asked the world to remember Somalia, where 2.9 million people are living in crisis. At that time, only 12 percent of Somalia's humanitarian needs had been funded for 2014. That figure now stands at 27 percent. In the last few weeks experts have been on the ground assessing what activities are needed where, to pull people out of crisis.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

[http://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/risk\\_of\\_relapse\\_-\\_call\\_to\\_action\\_-\\_somalia\\_crisis\\_update\\_july\\_-\\_2014\\_hi\\_res.pdf](http://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/risk_of_relapse_-_call_to_action_-_somalia_crisis_update_july_-_2014_hi_res.pdf) [PDF format, 4 pages, 3.66 MB].

#### Item#7

GOP Has Midterm Engagement Advantage. Pew Research Center for the People & the Press. July 24, 2014.

The Republican Party holds a clear advantage in voter engagement in this fall's midterm elections, according to the survey. Yet GOP voters are not as enthused and engaged as they were at this point in the midterm campaign four years ago, prior to the Republican Party winning control of the House of Representatives, or as Democratic voters were in 2006, before Democrats gained control of Congress. The latest survey finds neither party has an advantage in voter preferences. Currently, 45% say if the election were held today they would support the Republican in their district or lean toward the Republican, while 47% favor the Democrat or lean Democratic.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://www.people-press.org/files/2014/07/2014-Midterms-Release2.pdf> [PDF format, 44 pages, 1.10 MB].

#### Item#8

Civil Defense Groups. U.S. Institute of Peace. Bruce "Ossie" Oswald. July 31, 2014.

More than three hundred defense groups provide security to local communities in states around the world. While it is true that such groups can be a resource-efficient means for states to provide law and order to their communities, it is also true that they can worsen security.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

[http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/SR350\\_Civil\\_Defense\\_Groups\\_Developing\\_Accountability.pdf](http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/SR350_Civil_Defense_Groups_Developing_Accountability.pdf) [PDF format, 12 pages, 148.21 KB].

#### Item#9

Visual Propaganda and Extremism in the Online Environment. Strategic Studies Institute. Carol K. Winkler and Cori E. Dauber. July 25, 2014.

Visual images have been a central component of propaganda for as long as propaganda has been produced. But recent developments in communication and information technologies have given terrorist and extremist groups options and abilities they never would have been able to come close to even 5 or 10 years ago. There are terrorist groups who, with very little initial investment, are making videos that are coming so close to the quality of BBC or CNN broadcasts that the difference is meaningless, and with access to the web they have instantaneous access to a global audience. Given the broad social science consensus on the power of visual images relative to that of words, the strategic implications of these groups' sophistication in the use of images in the online environment is carefully considered in a variety of contexts by the authors in this collection.

<http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=1213> [HTML format with a link to the PDF format, 258 pages, 3.69 MB].

#### Item#10

Debt in America. Urban Institute. Carolinge Ratcliffe et al. July 29, 2014.

Debt can be constructive, allowing people to build equity in homes or finance education, but it can also burden families into the future. Total debt is driven by mortgage debt; both are highly concentrated in high-cost housing markets, mostly along the coasts. Among Americans with a credit file, average total

debt was \$53,850 in 2013, but was substantially higher for people with a mortgage (\$209,768) than people without a mortgage (\$11,592). Non-mortgage debt, in contrast, is more spatially dispersed. It ranges from a high of \$14,532 in the East South Central division to a low of \$17,883 in New England.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/413190-Debt-in-America.pdf> [PDF format, 14 pages, 1.22 MB].

#### Item#11

Modest Improvement in Views of Economic News. Pew Research Center for the People & the Press. August 5, 2014.

Amid recent reports on the U.S. unemployment rate and gross domestic product, public views of economic news have improved modestly since February. A 64%-majority of the public says they are hearing "a mix of both good and bad news" about the economy these days, little changed over the last several months. But about a quarter (24%) say they are hearing mostly bad news about the economy, down from 33% in February and as low as at any point over the past five years. Though relatively few say they are hearing mostly good economic news (10%), this figure has edged higher over the past six months (from 5%). In particular, public perceptions of jobs news have ticked more positive.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://www.people-press.org/files/2014/08/8-5-14-Economic-News-Release.pdf> [PDF format, 15 pages, 446.02 KB].

#### Item#12

Rapid Bus: A Low-Cost, High-Capacity Transit System for Major Urban Areas. Cato Institute. Randal O'Toole. July 30, 2014.

Prompted by federal funding, more than 30 American cities have built or are building new rail transit lines. These expensive lines have debatable value as they put transit agencies in debt and impose high maintenance costs, yet they carry few riders more than the buses they replace and produce minimal, if any, environmental benefits. As an alternative to rail transit, the paper proposes a "rapid bus" system that would offer fast, frequent, and comfortable transportation to most people in an urban area. The paper also estimates the annualized costs of such a system and compare it with the costs of a traditional system of rail supplemented by feeder buses.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://object.cato.org/sites/cato.org/files/pubs/pdf/pa752.pdf> [PDF format, 16 pages, 200.49 KB].